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Writings on American History, 1902. By ERNEST C. RICHARDSON and A. E. MORSE. (Princeton: The Library book store. 1904. Pp. xxi, 294.)

THE beginning of this series of annual indexes to the literature of American history is an event upon which American historians are to be congratulated. Early in the history of the American Historical Association efforts were made by Mr. Paul Leicester Ford, Mr. A. Howard Clark, and Professor John M. Vincent to supply a bibliography of the writings of the members of the Association, or a record of the current literature of American history. The result of this private research was necessarily fragmentary. Now, however, we have assurance of a continued and complete—or at least more complete—record, since the work which Dr. Richardson has inaugurated in the volume in hand has been assumed by the Bureau of Historical Research of the Carnegie Institution.

The first volume of the projected series of indexes is of singular interest. It consists of some 6,500 titles, comprising references to separate works and to articles in about 300 different periodicals. It includes, under the caption Periodicals and Transactions, an article on the serial literature of American history, which in some particulars supplements the very excellent list published by the New York Public Library in 1898. Under the general headings History, study, writing and teaching, Historical societies, Bibliography; under the geographical headings United States, Canada, Massachusetts, Virginia, Martinique, etc.; under the period headings Colonial period, American Revolution, Civil War, etc.; and under the special headings Education, Literature, Politics, Labor, etc., are numerous interesting references. Related subject headings are brought together in a classified index at the end of the volume. For example, under the heading American Revolution there is a reference not merely to the same heading in the alphabetical list, under which there are some eighty entries, but also to eighteen other heads, such as Boston siege, Declaration of Independence, and Loyalists, under which there are twenty-five additional entries. This is sufficient demonstration of the value of the contents of the work.

As to its method—and, as the editors say, the book is first of all an essay in method—there must of course be some difference of opinion. In the first place, as to the aim of the work: Should it be made of general use? and should it include references to general literature? or should it be an index to historical literature merely, for the use of historical students? The greater economy with which the work could be prepared and consulted, and the desirability of conformity to the plans for an international bibliography of the historical sciences make the latter, and a strict interpretation of the aim of the work, perhaps, preferable. And by a strict interpretation we mean one that shall exclude the great mass of popular narratives and descriptions, which are of little use to the student of to-day and will be of less use to the student of tomorrow; and

not only these, but the numerous descriptions of contemporary life and discussions of contemporary questions, which, although excellent material for the historian of the future, are of no value to the historian of the present and do not belong to a record of the historical activity of the present.

The description of the literature included within the purview of the compilers exhibits two notable features: definitions of the subjects, and appraisal of some of the books listed. The first of these renders the work of value as a dictionary as well as a bibliography, and the combination has its useful as well as its humorous aspects. But I am not sure that it is to be commended, and that, even in those cases where it has some use, better results could not be obtained by substituting a description of the book for the definition of the subject. The second feature of the entries, above referred to, is the appraisal of some of the books listed. These appraisements consist for the most part of quotations from reviews, more or less authoritative and more or less rhetorical. The result is interesting but somewhat disappointing. After reading a few pages of appraisal the felicitous phrases in common use among reviewers begin to cloy. Sentiment, moreover, tends to take the place of fact. For example, one work is described as complete, while another more complete but less popular work is simply described as interesting — “interesting from cover to cover”, the phrase is. After Price’s *Old Masters of the Blue Grass*, the note is, “Has sympathetically recalled the lives of six artists”, but who the artists were the note does not tell. Of the author of another work we are informed on the authority of one reviewer that he did not make much use of the sources and on the authority of another that he depended mainly upon them. The trouble with this method, indeed, is similar to that with the older historical method, diction and secondary sources are allowed to take the place of science and the original sources. In elementary bibliographical works this is no doubt desirable and even necessary, but in a scientific work for reference use this seems unfortunate, the more so that the proper description of the literature listed is essential to its proper classification.

And the classification of the literature listed is as important a point as its selection and description. This the editors recognize. “For the special student,” they say, “the classed form is usually counted best”. Aiming at the instruction of the general reader, however, they have adopted in the present work the alphabetical subject form, with a classified index to supply in part the needs of the specialist. To speak frankly, this seems like putting the cart before the horse. Special bibliographies, like the International catalogue of scientific literature and like this, should be of most use to the specialist — indeed, their use by any one else should be discouraged. And to insure their use to the specialist they must be arranged as other scientific works are, by chapter and by paragraph, and indexed. In this way the literature relating to periods, to movements, and to institutions can be brought together as it cannot be either by duplication of entries or by a classified index. Students of American

history and antiquities are not generally interested in horse chairs, in Kansas post-offices, or in Oregon literature, but many are interested in the vehicles of colonial times, in the postal system, in American literature, and would prefer to see references to these subjects brought together in their logical place rather than scattered from A to Z. And unless one is to double the bulk of the work by duplication of entries, such an arrangement is necessary. For example, under the article Libraries in the classified index there are several entries referring to twenty-three different articles. But in the alphabetical list there are twenty-seven more of a similar character, among which are the most valuable contributions of the year, Mr. Larned's history of the Buffalo library and Mr. Foster's history of the libraries of Providence. Finally, there is this added advantage in a classified list, that classification requires a juster discrimination in the selection of material, and a more accurate description of it. One may doubt whether such articles as Bananas and Sponges would have crept into a classified list, and whether a work described as one of the most entertaining and instructive recollections of the antislavery conflict would not have been indexed under slavery as well as under Bowditch.

I have extended my remarks upon these questions of scope, description, and arrangement partly because the editors invited discussion of these points, and partly because of the importance of the work itself. As I said above, the beginning of this series of annual indexes to the literature of American history is an event upon which American historians are to be congratulated.

W. D. JOHNSTON.

A Short History of Ancient Peoples. By Robinson Souttar, M.A., D.C.L., with an introduction by the Rev. A. H. Sayce, M.A., D.D. (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1903, New York, imported by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904, pp. xxiv, 728.) This is a useful compendium of the histories of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, the Medes and Persians, the Hebrews, Phœnicia, Carthage, Greece, and Rome; of the 712 pages of text somewhat more than one-half is given to Greece and Rome. The style is clear, the narrative smooth and interesting; there are fourteen excellent maps and a tolerably good index. The history of each people is given separately; this plan occasions some repetitions, a necessary result of the interconnections of the various histories, but the repetitions are generally helpful. The best part of the book is that devoted to Greece and Rome. In the early history of Egypt and the Asiatic peoples the author appears to be less at home and not very well acquainted with modern critical methods and results. The statement (p. 26) that the mother of Amenhotep IV was a "princess of Northern Syria, and a worshipper of the solar disk" is incorrect. There is no "Egyptian legend of the Exodus" (p. 32): the author entirely misconceives the stele of Merenptah in which the name "Israel" occurs;